



February 21, 2018

The Honorable Peg Flory
Chair
The Honorable John Rodgers
Vice-Chair
The Honorable Dick Mazza
The Honorable Francis K. Brooks
The Honorable David Soucy
Senate Committee on Institutions
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Re: American Medical Association and Vermont Medical Society **strong support** for Senate Bill 166, An act relating to the provision of medication-assisted treatment for inmates

Dear Senate Committee on Institutions Members:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), our physician and student members and Vermont Medical Society (VMS), we write in **strong support** of Senate Bill 166 (S.B. 166), “An act relating to the provision of medication-assisted treatment for inmates.” This bill continues Vermont’s leadership in putting forward and implementing policies to reverse the nation’s and Vermont’s opioid-related overdose and death epidemic. Critically, this bill demonstrates Vermont’s unequivocal support to enhance treatment of those with an opioid use disorder, a position that highlights Vermont’s national leadership on this issue.

The AMA and VMS specifically support S.B.166 because it will help identify those with an opioid use disorder, including whether the person currently is receiving treatment. Continuity of care is paramount to maintaining long-term recovery for opioid use disorder, and this bill helps ensure that a person currently receiving medication assisted treatment (MAT) remains on MAT; or that a person who has an opioid use disorder can begin treatment with MAT. There is broad medical and public health policy support for MAT:

- Using Medicine To Treat Opioid Use Disorder Reduces Illicit Drug Use, Disease Rates, Over-doses And Criminal Activity. “Patients who use medications to treat their OUD remain in therapy longer than people who don’t; they are also less likely to use illicit opioids. In addition, MAT helps to decrease overdose deaths and improve other health outcomes, such as reducing the transmission of infectious diseases,

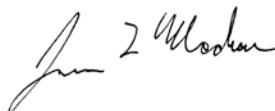
including HIV and hepatitis C.”¹ US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved MAT for Opioid Use Disorder includes buprenorphine (e.g., Suboxone, Sublocade, and Probuphine), naltrexone (e.g. Vivitrol) and methadone.

- Medication-Assisted Treatment Is A Cost-Effective Service For Those With An Opioid Use Disorder. “Results suggest that medication-assisted therapy is associated with reduced general health care expenditures and utilization, such as inpatient hospital admissions and outpatient emergency department visits, for Medicaid beneficiaries with opioid addiction.”²
- The Value Of Medication-Assisted Treatment Is “Unequivocally Established.” “According to the National Institutes of Health, ‘the safety and efficacy of medically assisted treatment has been unequivocally established,’ adding that ‘methadone maintenance coupled with relevant social, medical and psychological services has the highest probability of being the most effective of all available treatments for opioid addiction.’”³

The AMA and VMS are particularly pleased to see that Vermont will further enhance its nationally-recognized “hub and spoke” model for increasing access to treatment for opioid use disorder by working collaboratively with the health care community and opioid treatment programs throughout the state. This type of collaboration has proven elusive for many, and we believe that in passing S.B.166, you will help establish a national model for other states. For the aforementioned reasons, we urge the Vermont Legislature to swiftly enact S.B. 166.

If you have any questions, please contact Daniel Blaney-Koen, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, AMA, at daniel.blaney-koen@ama-assn.org or (312) 464-4954; and Jessa Barnard, Esq., Executive Director, VMS, at jbarnard@vtmd.org or (802) 223-7898, Ext. 11.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD
Executive Vice President, CEO
American Medical Association



Trey Dobson, MD
President
Vermont Medical Society

cc: Senator Tim Ashe
Senator Claire Ayer
Senator Dick Sears, Jr.

¹ “The Case for Medication-Assisted Treatment,” Pew Charitable Trusts, February 1, 2017. Available at <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/fact-sheets/2017/02/the-case-for-medication-assisted-treatment>

² Mary Mohlman, et al., “Impact of Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Addiction on Medicaid Expenditures and Health Services Utilization Rates in Vermont,” Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment, August 2016. Available at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0740547215300659>

³ “Effective Medical Treatment of Opiate Addiction,” National Institutes of Health, November 17-19, 1997. Available at <https://consensus.nih.gov/1997/1998TreatOpiateAddiction108PDF.pdf>